

Ireland to impose coronavirus lockdown

27 March 2020

Ireland is to impose a lockdown in a bid to stem the spread of the coronavirus, Prime Minister Leo Varadkar said on Friday.

"Everybody must stay at home, in all circumstances," he said of the new measures to come into force at midnight (0000 GMT) on Saturday and last until 12 April.

Exceptions will be made for essential workers, medical appointments and the purchase of food.

Travel for "vital family reasons", for farming and exercise within two kilometres (one mile) of homes will also be allowed.

All public or private gatherings "of any number of people" outside a single household are also prohibited.

"These are radical actions aimed at saving as many people's lives as possible," said Varadkar at a press conference.

"I'm asking us for a time to forego our personal liberties and freedoms for a greater cause."

There have been 22 COVID-19 related deaths and 2,121 confirmed cases of the virus in Ireland, according to department of health figures released earlier Friday.

Earlier this month the Irish government ordered schools, universities and pubs to close nationwide.

Swathes of non-essential businesses were also ordered shut earlier this week as Ireland braced for an uptick of COVID-19 cases within its borders.

Emergency [coronavirus](#) legislation passed through the final stages of Irish parliament and was signed into law by president Michael D. Higgins earlier Friday.

The bill enacts a rent freeze and a moratorium on evictions for the duration of the crisis.

It also streamlines the registration of healthcare and defence forces staff returning to the workforce, and enables the Irish government's financial supports to those laid off as a result of COVID-19 business closures.

"The legislation is emergency legislation for a time of crisis," said Higgins in a statement.

"These are difficult times, but our difficulties will come to an end."

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